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ABSTRACT

Vocational education and culinary arts have gained a new respect. Since the mid-1970s, the status of culinary artists (cooks and chefs) has changed from domestic to professional. This change and the many changes in food technology have brought about a heightened awareness of the need for better training for culinary professionals. Improved communication between education and industry have provided students with skills more suited to meet the needs of the job market. The United States is regarded as the leader in the field of culinary arts due to the development of vocational facilities, developments in the areas of food science and agricultural methods, and more refined techniques for the presentation of materials. Use of a competency-based curriculum allows teachers to assess each student's capabilities. Students at Johnson and Wales University (J&W), Rhode Island, are developing electronic portfolios used by employers recruiting on campus. These portfolios describe the competencies of each student that will link him or her with jobs appropriate for the skill levels the student possesses. Evolution in vocational culinary education has prompted the development of new programs. J&W has begun a four-year bachelor of science in culinary arts, the first of its kind in the United States. Faculties working in this field will require higher credentials. J&W is on the verge of linking branch campuses by two-way interactive television to compensate for a shortage of trained faculty. (YLB)

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The Effects of Change in Vocational, Technical, and Occupational Education on the Teaching of Culinary Arts in America

Researchers today are devising new ideas for the delivery of information regarding vocational education. This has caused a rippling effect on the community of culinary educators which has been astounding. Vast changes are in the developmental stage. They may totally change our approach to the materials taught and the methods by which they are transmitted.

Vocational education in this country was first recognized in 1925 as a legitimate form of education, as described by Allen (1925). It was, at last, getting community and industry support. During these times and well into the twentieth century, high school was basically thought of as a stepping-stone to college, as indicated by Venn (1964). Vocational schools were previously thought of as an alternative for those students who could not succeed in an academic setting. Far too much emphasis was placed on the attainment of a college degree. Many individuals, who could have achieved much success through career education, never were afforded the opportunity.

However, in the 1960s and 1970s vocational education experienced an unprecedented growth. During

this period federal funding increased by 400%, and secondary programs in culinary arts were developed. Prior to this, little formal vocational culinary arts training was available. As a result of these programs we began to see a shift from European dominance in the culinary industry in America. This meant that American-trained chefs could finally compete for jobs with their European counterparts.

The turning point for enrollment was in 1984, after which time there have been significant losses in the number of students enrolling in vocational programs. Gray (1991) states that there are three factors causing the declining enrollments. These include a decline in the secondary enrollment, increased graduation requirements, and a preference for higher education.

Vocational education and culinary arts have gained a new respect. As Chris Pipho (1989) of the Education Commission of the States wrote, "Matching work-force needs to human-skill availability may be the next challenge facing education." Assessing these work-force needs will also have to be a priority.

It was in the mid-1970s culinary artists (cooks and chefs) had their status changed from domestic to professional. This change has helped to bring about a heightened awareness of the need to better train our

culinary professionals. The many changes in food technology, as mentioned by Rajan (1988), have increased the need to educate chefs even further. To help insure that American chefs today stay in the forefront of the food industry worldwide, the American Culinary Federation (better known as the ACF) has developed a program called "Horizons 2000" (Culinary Review: June, 1991). The purpose of this program is to train chefs and to provide training that will lead chefs into the twenty-first century. Many innovative techniques and ideas will be shared through this program. Regional workshops will be the forum to transfer information to culinarians.

Vocational education has come a long way. Input from within the academic community has also helped in the evolutionary process. The North Carolina State Advisory Council on Vocational Education (1990) explained many recommendations in the field of vocational education.

Exploratory programs, such as the one implemented by Mr. Kevin J. Carr, director of vocational education at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, on the island of Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts has afforded students first hand to experience various career opportunities during their freshman year. As a result

students entering into vocational programs do so having a better knowledge of what to expect once in the programs than in the past.

There has been sophistication in all areas of education, including vocational culinary arts. Improved communication between education and industry have provided students with skills more suited to meet the needs of the job market. Research by vocational educators and industry has given us a better understanding of these needs. A valid assessment of industry's needs is explained in "Outlook for the 90s" The State of Maine (1989), which provides an occupational supply/demand notebook, allowing us to forecast needs in job areas and to plan for the training of people to fill those positions.

Vocational education has evolved over the last seventy-five years in an effort to meet the needs of both man and industry. Many positive changes have come about as a result of this growth, but we must not become complacent. America is looked upon today as the leader in the field of culinary arts. Many factors have played an important role in our gaining this important status. It is not just the fact that through the development of vocational facilities we are better equipped to train and have a more structured educational

format. The development in the areas of food science and agricultural methods unavailable elsewhere have given us the advantage of having resources unavailable in many other countries.

Growing with this technology and taking advantage of our resources is imperative in career education today. We must look beyond the present and try to predict the future, as we may be using curriculum that is job-relevant, as was suggested by Elliott and Benson (1988) in their 1988 "V-TECS Guide for Commercial Foods."

Techniques in the presentation of materials over the years have also become more refined. The use of a curriculum, which is competency-based, allows teachers to assess each student's capabilities. Employers have found this to be a great asset when analyzing a student's data when recruiting. Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island one of the leaders in this country in career education students are developing electronic portfolios which will be used by employers when recruiting on campus. These portfolios will describe the competencies of each student which will link him/her with jobs that are appropriate for the skill levels which students possess.

The result of this modern evolution in vocational

culinary education and in vocational education in general has prompted the development of new programs. Formerly most post secondary culinary programs were two-years offering an associate degree. Johnson and Wales University has begun a four year bachelor of science in culinary arts the first one of its kind in this country. The Culinary Institute of America and New England Culinary Institute have also seen a need for this advanced culinary curriculum and have also implemented four year programs specializing in various areas of the culinary industry.

Conversation with other educators and members of industry showed a need for this type of program. The demands placed on chefs today have necessitated the development of a more intense training program for those students demonstrating the potential to be leaders in the field of culinary arts. Programs as they existed in the past only prepared most students for entry level positions. However, with the economic conditions found in the United States today, corporations have neither the time, nor the money, to invest in the development and refinement of culinary skills of newly hired employees. The answer to this problem will hopefully be the four year culinary arts program.

The demands for these programs will also mean that

the faculties working in vocational culinary education will have to have higher credentials than in the past in order to meet the demands of accrediting bodies. Already we have a shortage of faculty with both the practical and theoretical experience needed. This shortage may necessitate delivering vocational programs via two-way interactive technology. Johnson and Wales is already on the verge of linking the universities branch campuses by two-way interactive television. Thus all programs offered at the main campus in Providence, Rhode Island could be offered to students in Charleston, South Carolina, Miami, Florida, Norfolk, Virginia and Vail, Colorado.

Culinary education is becoming a virtual reality, (VanLandingham, 1995). The virtual culinary classroom will allow students to watch instructors on television after going to the market to pick up their school supplies and follow along in their home kitchen calling in with questions live on a 800 number. These future chefs would then periodically go to a regionally approved testing site for skill testing.

In summation, we see that several things have happened. A need for vocational education was seen to be important. Support was gained by national and local government to fund these programs. Programs were

developed and refined to meet the needs of education and industry with continuous appraisal and support for further program development as needed.

Culinary education in America as well as all of vocational education has certainly come a long way. The result, the quality of workers entering into the workforce in the United States are better educated and will hopefully be more qualified than ever before.

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